

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OUAGAD 03711 220733Z
ACTION SY-05

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FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7961
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AFSP, ASEC, ABLD
SUBJECT: LOBBY CONTROLS-PROGRAM TO COMBAT TERRORISM

REF: ABIDJAN 7625

1. AF/EX DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SWEDENBURG, DRAFTER OF THIS MESSAGE, HAS FOR PAST YEAR BEEN TRAVELING AND HAS VISITED MOST OF THE REFTEL ADDRESSEE POSTS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY INSTRUMENTAL IN POINTING OUT THAT THE LOBBY RENOVATIONS ORIGINALLY ENVISAGED FOR NIAMEY WERE EXTENSIVE, BEYOND THE CAPABILITY OF POST RESOURCES, AND WOULD BE ENORMOUSLY EXPENSIVE WITH ON-SITE FBO OR OTHER IMPORTED ENGINEERING/CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION AND WORK FORCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB.

2. WHAT PRICE DO WE PAY TO COMBAT TERRORISM? SOME OF OUR EMBASSIES OUT HERE HAVE PHYSICAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WHICH ARE LAUGHABLE AND CHILD'S PLAY TO EVEN FUMBLING SECOND-STOREY MAN LET ALONE A TERRORIST TRAINED IN THE ARTCRAFTS OF ASSASSINATION AND FEAR. SOME OF OUR EMBASSIES HAVE SOME MEASURES OF PROTECTION BUT NONE OF THEM ARE COMPLETELY INVULNERABLE TO A DEDICATED TERRORIST. MOST OF THE SAFEGUARDS WE HAVE INSTALLED IN SOME OF THESE "MORE PROTECTED" ESTABLISHMENTS ONLY CONFUSE THOSE WHO MUST LIVE AND WORK IN THE PREMISES AS WELL AS THOSE, BOTH PRIVATE AMERICAN AND NON-AMERICANS, WHO CALL AT OUR EMBASSIES FOR

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PAGE 02 OUAGAD 03711 220733Z

ASSISTANCE AND FOR OTHER REASONS, INCLUDING THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE. THE NUMBER OF LOCKS, GATES AND OTHER BARRIERS (OFTEN WITH MALFUNCTIONING MECHANISMS) CONFRONTING WORKER AND VISITOR ALIKE HAVE NUISANCE VALUE AT LEAST. LIKEWISE, MARINE GUARDS WHO SIT BEHIND PLASTIC PROTECTION (THE TERM IS INTENDED IN BOTH THE PRATICAL AS WELL AS LITERARY SENSE) AND WHO OFTEN CANNOT COMMUNICATE WITH THOSE OUTSIDE THEIR CAGE BECAUSE

THE INTERCOM DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK, HAVE A RIGHT TO FEEL DEJECTED
AND AS FRUSTRATED AS THOSE OUTSIDE THE CAGE.

3. THIS MESSAGE IS NOT INTENDED TO TREAT THE THREAT OF TERRORISM
LIGHTLY. IT IS INTENDED TO COMPLEMENT THE SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED
REFTEL. THE DRAFTER ALSO HOPES IT BRINGS HOME THAT EVEN WITH
VARYING LOCAL SITUATIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES IN AFRICA, THERE HAS
BEEN NO CONSISTENT POLICY OF APPLYING THE STANDARDS OF A-4779
OUT HERE. NOT THAT HE IS SURE THEY ARE NEEDED. IT IS IRKSOME TO
KEEP BEING REMINDED THAT ALL OF THESE SECURITY SAFEGUARDS ARE
NECESSARY BECAUSE IT IS THE SIGN OF OUR TIME AND THE SOCIETY WE
LIVE IN. THERE ARE A HOST OF US WHO WOULD PREFER TO RISK A
LITTLE DANGER AND REVERT TO A MORE NORMAL AND TRADITIONAL SETTING
AT OUR DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR PREMISES WHERE WORKERS AND
VISITORS ARE NOT DEPRESSED BY THE BASTION-LIKE APPEARANCE OF
SO MANY OF OUR PRESENT-DAY ESTABLISHMENTS. BUT IF WE MUST
MAINTAIN ALL OF THESE BULWARKS, LET US AT LEAST GO
ABOUT IT IN A SENSIBLE, AND CONSISTENT, WAY, WHICH IS REALLY
WHAT REFTEL IS ALL ABOUT.

4. DEPARTMENT MAY MAKE SUCH ADDED DISTRIBUTION AS DEEMED
APPROPRIATE. KILLION

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